

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

**PRINCIPAL FACTS FOR ABOUT 500 GRAVITY STATIONS
IN PART OF THE HUMBOLDT RIVER BASIN, LOVELOCK
AND WINNEMUCCA QUADRANGLES, NEVADA**

By

E.B. Jewel, D.A. Ponce, and R.L. Morin



Open-File Report 97-519

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CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	1
Introduction.....	1
Acknowledgments.....	2
Gravity datum and reduction	2
Terrain corrections.....	3
Gravity data.....	4
References	6

ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE 1. Index map.....	7
2. Gravity station locations.....	8
3. Isostatic gravity map.....	9

TABLES

TABLE 1. Explanation of principal facts format for table 2.....	10
2. Principal facts of gravity data.....	11

ABSTRACT

Gravity data collected in the Humboldt River basin in north-central Nevada are described. These data were collected as part of an interagency effort by the U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Land Management to assess the mineral, environmental, water, and cultural resources of the Humboldt River basin.

INTRODUCTION

Gravity investigations of the Humboldt River basin were begun as part of an effort to help characterize the geology and hydrology of the Humboldt River ecosystem. These investigations are part of an interagency effort by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the Bureau of Land Management to assess the mineral, environmental, water, and cultural resources of the Humboldt River basin.

The study area is located between lat. 40° and 41° N. and long. 116° and 120° W., on the Winnemucca and Lovelock 1° by 2° quadrangles (fig. 1). This report documents recently collected gravity data and incorporates them with previously published data (Ponce, 1977) to establish a gravity database for the Humboldt River basin. The locations of the gravity stations collected as part of this investigation and an outline of the Humboldt River basin are shown in figure 2, and the locations of the complete set of gravity stations and an isostatic gravity map are shown in figure 3. Previously published gravity data were compiled from various sources and are available from the USGS on CD-ROM (Ponce, 1997).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors wish to thank Donald Plouff for his help in collating the gravity database and for providing valuable assistance in preparing for the field work.

GRAVITY DATUM AND REDUCTION

Observed gravity values are referenced to the International Gravity Standardization Net 1971 (IGSN 71) gravity datum (Morelli, 1974, p. 18). The following three IGSN 71 base stations were used: Battle Mountain Airport (No. 2344-2), Elko Airport (No. 3899-2), and the Lovelock Courthouse (No. 2348-1) (Jablonsky, 1974).

All gravity data were reduced using standard gravity corrections including: (a) the Earth-tide correction, which corrects for tidal effects of the moon and sun; (b) instrument drift correction, which compensates for drift in the instrument's spring; (c) the latitude correction, which incorporates the variation of the Earth's gravity with latitude; (d) the free-air correction, which accounts for the difference in elevation between each station and sea-level; (e) the Bouguer correction, which corrects for the attraction of material between the station and sea-level; (f) the curvature correction, which corrects the Bouguer correction for the effect of the Earth's curvature to 166.7 km; (g) the terrain correction, which removes the effect of topography to a radial distance of 166.7 km; and (h) the isostatic correction, which removes long-wavelength variations in the gravity field inversely related to topography.

Observed gravity values were obtained from gravity meter readings using the factory calibration table for a LaCoste and Romberg meter (USGS meter G-17C). The calibration table values were modified with a secondary calibration factor (1.00078) based on repeated measurements made over

the Mount Hamilton, Calif. calibration loop (Barnes and others, 1969). Observed gravity values at each station were then adjusted assuming a time-dependent linear drift between the first and last base station reading of each day. Free-air gravity anomalies were calculated using the Geodetic Reference System 1967 formula for the theoretical gravity on the ellipsoid (International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics, 1971, p. 60) and Swick's formula (1942, p. 65) for the free-air correction. Bouguer, curvature, and terrain corrections (discussed in the following section) were added to the free-air correction to determine the complete Bouguer anomaly. A standard reduction density of 2.67 g/cm³ was used to determine the Bouguer anomaly. Finally, a regional isostatic gravity field was removed from the Bouguer field assuming an Airy-Heiskanen model for isostatic compensation of topographic loads (Simpson and others, 1983) with an assumed crustal thickness of 25 km, a crustal density of 2.67 g/cm³, and a density contrast across the base of the model of 0.4 g/cm³.

TERRAIN CORRECTIONS

Terrain corrections account for the variation of topography near a gravity station and may be calculated manually, digitally, or by a combination of both methods. Manual terrain correction systems involve dividing the terrain surrounding a gravity station into a series of zones and compartments. The average elevation of each compartment is manually estimated from a topographic map to derive the gravity effect of the terrain. There are two manual correction systems currently in general use. Hayford and Bowie (1912) devised a system dividing the terrain surrounding a gravity station into zones and equal area compartments. A system of subcompartments was devised based on Bowie's (1917, p. 9-18) subdivided zones to make the Hayford-Bowie system more accurate in areas of steep terrain. The second system, devised by Hammer (1939), was modeled after the Hayford-Bowie system, but relates the outer and inner radii of the zones to the width of the compartments to obtain equidimensional compartments.

Hammer believed this system maximized accuracy while minimizing the total number of compartments.

A number of systems exist for calculating terrain corrections using digital elevation data (Plouff, 1966; Plouff, 1977). Digital terrain correction systems use a scheme of digitizing topography on a grid to form a digital elevation model (DEM). The terrain correction is calculated by computing the distance and difference in elevation of each grid cell from the gravity station. The DEM used in the Humboldt River study was derived from USGS topographic elevation-contour plates at a scale of 1:250,000 and is available from the Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, National Cartographic Information Center, 507 National Center, Reston, VA 22092.

GRAVITY DATA

A total of 491 gravity stations were established as part of the study of the Humboldt River Basin between August 1996 and June 1997. The station names indicate the year the stations were established, the 1 by 2 degree quadrangle in which they are located, and a number reflecting the order in which they were collected. The gravity stations were established using LaCoste and Romberg gravity meter G-17C. Most of the stations were measured on bench marks, section corners, photogrammetric ‘spot’ elevations, or at points surveyed by a Global Positioning System (GPS). Bench mark elevations are usually considered accurate to about 0.3 m, whereas, spot elevations are generally accurate to 1/2 the topographic map contour interval or about 3 m. For stations established at locations where the elevation was not well-constrained, the elevation was determined using differential GPS. A comparison of GPS-determined elevations and local benchmarks or spot elevations indicate that GPS-determined elevations are accurate to about 3 m. The observed gravity measurements for all the stations are considered accurate to 0.02-0.05 milligals. Terrain corrections were calculated using a three-part process: the innermost or field

terrain correction; the inner-zone or manual terrain correction; and the outer-zone terrain correction (Spielman and Ponce, 1984). The innermost terrain correction was estimated in the field to the outer radius of Hayford-Bowie zone B (68 m) using a system of tables and charts. The inner-zone terrain correction was estimated manually for Hayford-Bowie zones C and D with an outer radius of 0.59 km, using 7.5' topographic maps and a circular template based on the Hayford-Bowie system. Finally, the outer-zone terrain correction was calculated from the outer radius of zone D to 166.7 km using a DEM and a computer procedure by Plouff (1977).

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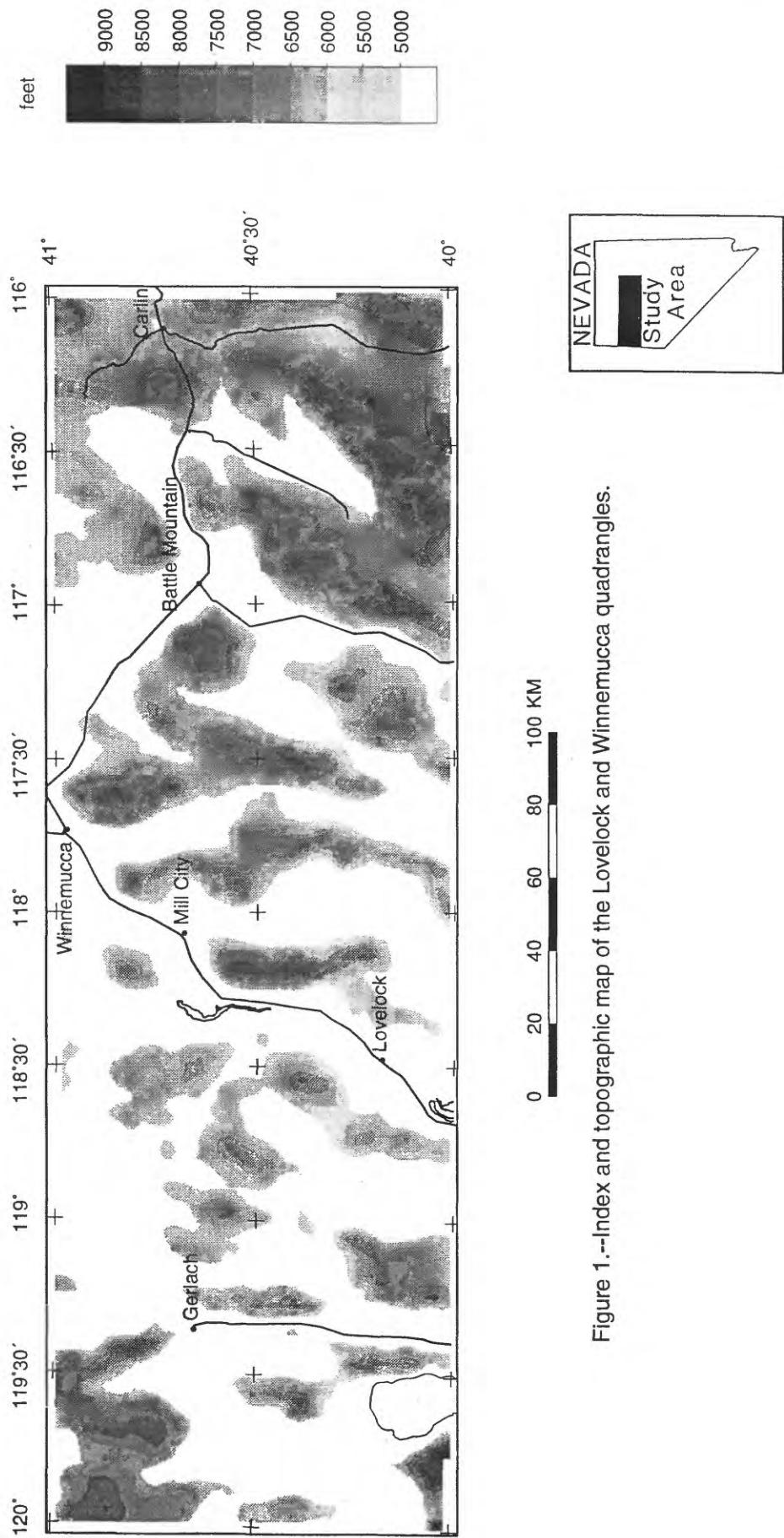


Figure 1.--Index and topographic map of the Lovelock and Winnemucca quadrangles.

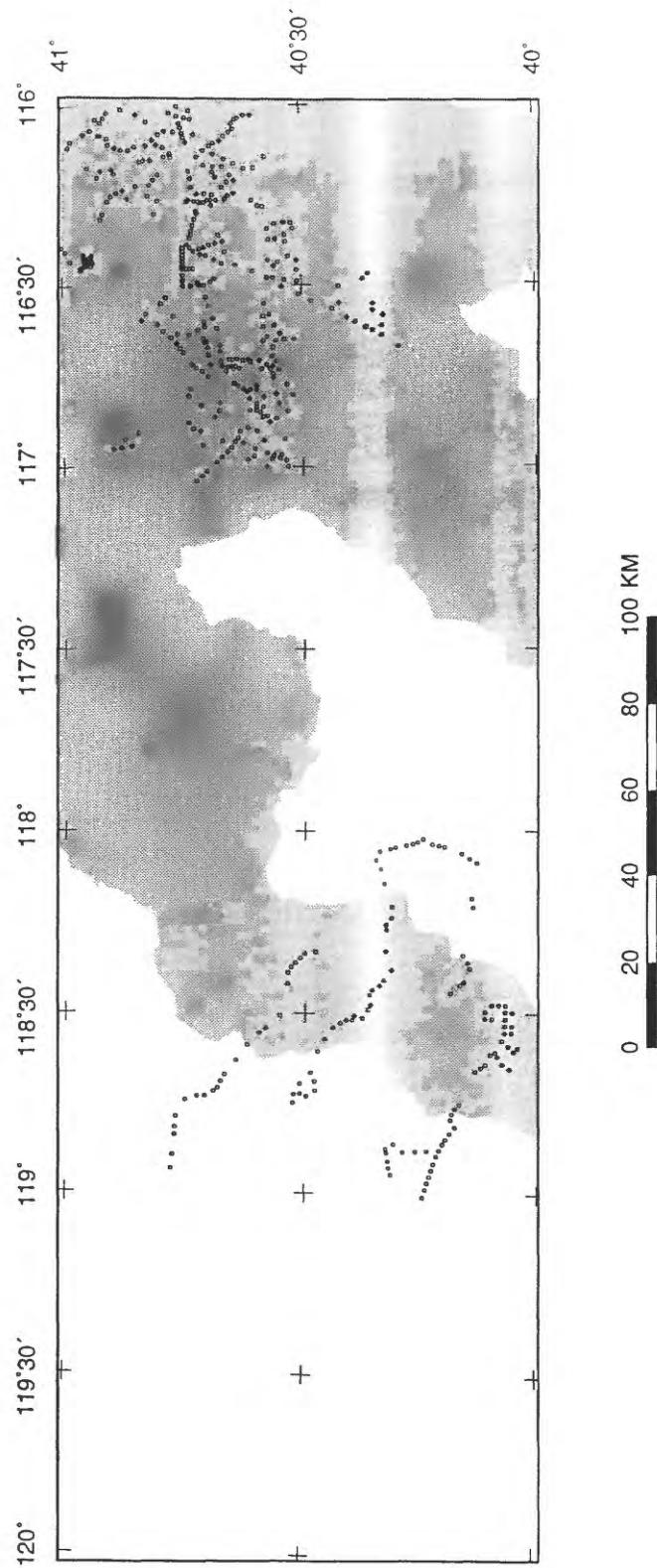


Figure 2.--Gravity station locations. o, gravity station; Shading, Humboldt River Basin.

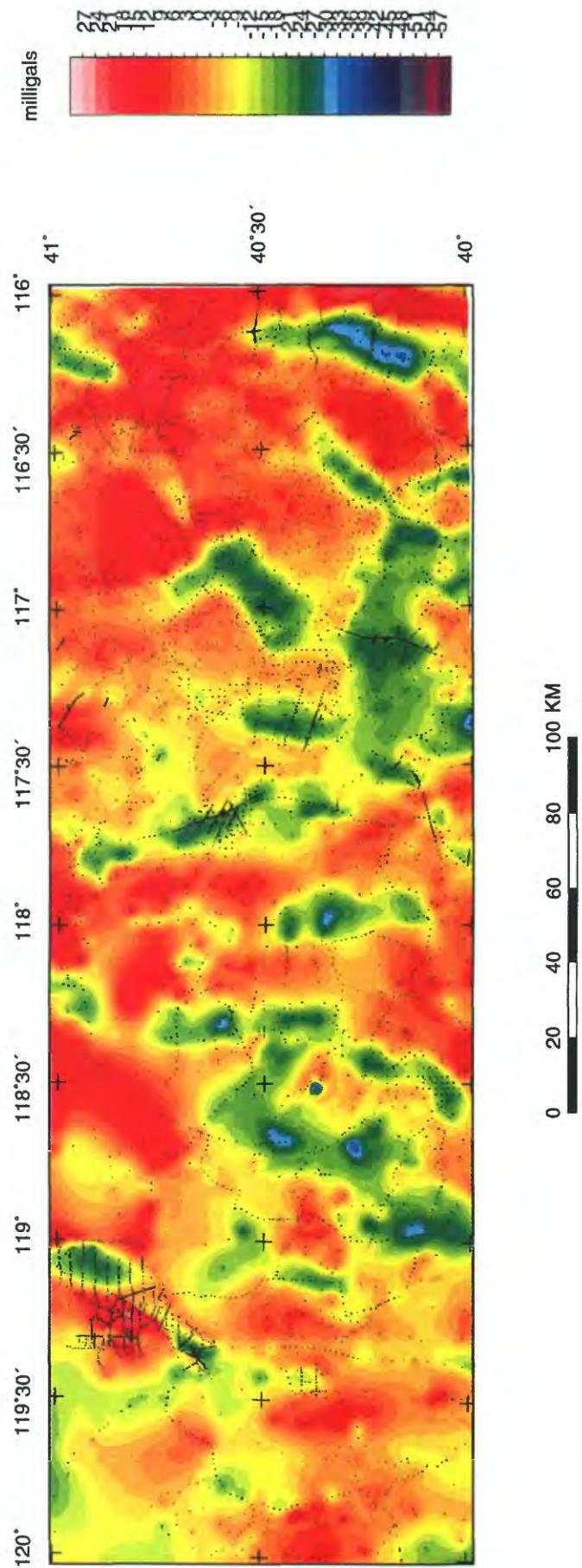


Figure 3.--Isostatic gravity map of the Lovelock and Winnemucca quadrangles. +, gravity station.

TABLE 1.--*Explanation of principal facts format for table 2*

Item	Explanation
STATION NAME -----	An alphanumeric combination of 8 characters used for station identification
LATITUDE -----	Latitude in degrees and minutes, to 0.01 minute
LONGITUDE -----	Longitude in degrees and minutes, to 0.01 minute
ELEV -----	Elevation, to 0.1 ft
OBS GRV -----	Observed gravity, to 0.01 mGal
FREE AIR -----	Free-air anomaly, to 0.01 mGal
TERRAIN--HAND -----	Inner-zone terrain correction for a density of 2.67 g/cm ³ , to 0.01 mGal, followed by a letter denoting the extent of the correction. Upper case denotes Hayford-Bowie system of zones (Hayford and Bowie, 1912), lower case denotes Hammer system of zones (Hammer, 1939). D, 0.0 to 0.59 km.
TERRAIN--COMP -----	Complete or total terrain correction from the station to 166.7 km for a density of 2.67 g/cm ³ , to 0.01 mGal
BOUGUER ANOM -----	Complete Bouguer anomaly reduced for a density of 2.67 g/cm ³ , to 0.01 mGal
ISOST ANOM -----	Isostatic residual anomaly values assuming an Airy-Heiskanen model for isostatic compensation of topographic loads. This model assumes a crustal thickness of 25 km, a topographic density load of 2.67 g/cm ³ and a density contrast across the base of the model crust of 0.4 g/cm ³ .

TABLE 2.—*Principal facts of gravity data*—Continued

STATION NAME	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	ELEV (ft)	OBS (mGal)	GRAV	FREE AIR	TERRAIN HAND COMP	BOUG ANOM	ISOST ANOM
97WIN180	40 40.31	116 58.31	4508.6	979777.40	-27.6	0.0D	0.2	-182.5	-9.9
97WIN181	40 39.64	116 57.45	4512.4	979775.59	-28.0	0.0D	0.2	-183.1	-10.2
97WIN182	40 38.63	116 55.78	4506.0	979769.76	-33.0	0.0D	0.1	-187.9	-14.4
97WIN183	40 40.29	116 55.64	4506.0	979769.50	-35.7	0.0D	0.2	-190.6	-17.4
97WIN184	40 44.37	116 52.55	5256.7	979762.06	21.3	0.9D	4.0	-155.4	17.8
97WIN185	40 43.88	116 53.51	4757.0	979782.49	-4.5	0.1D	1.7	-166.4	6.6
97WIN186	40 50.65	116 54.11	4678.0	979803.41	-1.1	0.0D	0.6	-161.4	11.1
97WIN187	40 51.53	116 56.39	4562.0	979804.81	-11.9	0.0D	0.1	-168.8	3.0
97WIN188	40 52.78	116 56.66	4581.0	979807.11	-9.7	0.0D	0.0	-167.2	4.4
97WIN189	40 53.80	116 56.87	4586.0	979805.05	-12.8	0.0D	0.0	-170.6	1.1
97WIN190	40 52.39	116 55.26	4646.0	979806.70	-3.4	0.0D	0.1	-163.1	8.9